

Wells County Health Department

223 W. Washington, Suites 200-209 Bluffton, IN 46714
Phone (260) 824-6489 Fax (260) 824-8803

Guidelines for Food Service Establishments During Boil Water Orders and Advisories

A boil water **advisory** or interrupted water service is issued when some type of event has created the potential for contamination to enter the water supply and no direct sample evidence of contamination is present. A boil water **order** or **notice** is issued when there is direct sample evidence that the system is contaminated. To continue operating under a boil water order, all food establishments must secure and use potable water from an approved source. Disinfection of water from suspect sources may be an alternative.

The following points of use should be considered in an emergency:

- ◆ All water used in beverages such as coffee, tea, or fountain drink dispensers
- ◆ All water used as an ingredient in any food products (i.e.: condiments, sauces, dressings, desserts, etc.)
- ◆ All water used to make consumable ice
- ◆ All water used for handwashing
- ◆ All water used for washing and sanitizing of food contact surfaces
- ◆ All water used for washing of produce
- ◆ All water used for sanitizing solution for wiping cloths
- ◆ All water used in 3-compartment sinks (unless sanitized with heat booster or chemical)

The following equipment is plumbed directly into the municipal water supply, therefore, it should not be used during a boil advisory or notice:

- ◆ Carbonated fountain drink machines
- ◆ Beverage "gun" dispensers
- ◆ Ice machines that manufacture ice
- ◆ Product misters in grocery stores and markets
- ◆ Low-temperature/chemical sanitizing dishmachines
- ◆ Self-serve bulk water dispensers

Acceptable Methods of Disinfection:

1. **Chlorination:** Add 1/8 teaspoon (~0.75 mL) of unscented household chlorine bleach to one gallon of clear water and mix. If the water is cloudy, add 1/4 teaspoon (~1.50mL) and mix. Chlorine bleaches are inexpensive and can be secured from most grocery, discount, or drug stores. However, check the label to ensure that the active ingredient, sodium hypochlorite, is 5.25 percent. Wait thirty (30) minutes after adding chlorine before using the water for drinking or cooking purposes.

2. **Boiling:** The water may also be purified by boiling. In this method, bring the water to a full boil for at least one (1) minute (at altitudes above one mile, boil for three minutes). Cool and aerate the boiled water by pouring it through the air from one clean container to another, or mixing rapidly with a clean utensil. Aeration will reduce the flat taste caused by boiling.

NOTE: *Water filtering or treatment units may not remove all of the contaminants that the advisory or notice is targeting. Do not use an in-place unit unless it has been approved by the local health department or the Indiana State Department of Health.*

Acceptable Equipment/Alternatives to use:

- ◆ Hot water sanitizing dishmachines can be used once checked to ensure 180 degrees Fahrenheit minimum final rinse temperature.
- ◆ Direct plumbed coffee makers are allowable, once checked to ensure brewing temperatures of 180 degrees Fahrenheit or above.
- ◆ Instead of using low-temperature/chemical dishmachines, use 3-bay sink with a heat booster set at 170 degrees Fahrenheit OR a chemical sanitizer at 100 ppm of chlorine.
- ◆ Food establishments may consider the following alternative procedures to minimize water usage:
 - ◆ Commercially packaged ice may be substituted for ice made on-site.
 - ◆ Single-serve items or disposable utensils may be substituted for reusable dishes and utensils.
 - ◆ Prepared foods from approved sources may be used in place of foods requiring complex preparation.
 - ◆ Restrict menu choices or hours of operation.
 - ◆ Portable toilets may be utilized for sanitary purposes (units should include handsinks with own water source).

Call the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (317-308-3366) to determine the status of the water supply and to determine if the advisory or notice has been lifted (it may take up to 4 or more days). Once the notice is rescinded, these precautionary measures *must* be followed:

1. Flush the building water lines and clean faucet screens, water line strainers on mechanical dishwashing machines and similar equipment.
2. Flush and sanitize all water-using fixtures and appliances of standing water such as ice machines, beverage dispensers, hot water heaters, etc.
3. Run one batch of ice from machines that manufacture ice and discard that batch.
4. Clean and sanitize all fixtures, sinks, and equipment connected to water lines.

NOTE: In case of *chemical* contamination of the municipal water supply for a food establishment, the establishment shall immediately cease use of the water supply and contact the local health department. There must be water pressure before resuming operations in a food establishment and the water should be sampled for bacteriological quality. **The safety of water cannot be judged by color, odor or taste.**

If there are any questions during water emergency orders regarding appropriate operations at a food establishment, contact the Wells County Health Department Monday through Friday at 260-824-6489, or the Indiana State Department of Health, Food Program, Monday through Friday at (317) 233-7360, and all other times call (317) 233-1325.

A HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE DOES NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT AT THE ESTABLISHMENT FOR THESE GUIDELINES TO BE IMPLEMENTED. IT IS MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THE ESTABLISHMENT IS OPERATING IN A SAFE MANNER SO AS TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF THE PUBLIC.

Indiana State Department of Health
2 N. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-233-3125